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Oregon, a hotbed of extremism, seeks to curb paramilitaries

By **ANDREW SELSKY**
Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. (AP) — An armed takeover of a federal wildlife refuge. Over 100 straight days of racial justice protests that turned downtown Portland into a battleground. A violent breach of the state Capitol. Clashes between gun-toting right-wingers and leftist militants. Over the past decade, Oregon experienced the sixth-highest number of extremist incidents in the nation, despite being 27th in population, according to an Oregon Secretary of State report. Now, the state Legislature is consid-

ering a bill that, experts say, would create the nation's most comprehensive law against paramilitary activity. It would provide citizens and the state attorney general with civil remedies in court if armed members of a private paramilitary group interfere with, or intimidate, another person who is engaging in an activity they have a legal right to do, such as voting. A court could block paramilitary members from pursuing an activity if the state attorney general believed it would be illegal conduct.

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Members of the far-right group Proud Boys and anti-fascist protesters spray bear mace at each other during clashes between the politically opposed groups in Portland, Ore., Aug. 22, 2021. Associated Press

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Oregon, a hotbed of extremism, seeks to curb paramilitaries

Continued from Front

All 50 states prohibit private paramilitary organizations and/or paramilitary activity, but no other law creates civil remedies, said Mary McCord, an expert on terrorism and domestic extremism who helped craft the bill. The Oregon bill is also unique because it would allow people injured by private, unauthorized paramilitary activity to sue, she said.

Opponents say the law would infringe on rights to freely associate and to bear arms.

The bill's sponsor, Rep. Dacia Grayber, a Democrat from suburban Portland, said the proposed reforms "would make it harder for private paramilitaries



Law enforcement officers and protesters clash outside the Oregon State Capitol during a special session of the state legislature in Salem, Ore., on Dec. 21, 2020.

Associated Press

to operate with impunity throughout Oregon, regardless of their ideology." But dozens of conservative Oregonians, in written testimony, have expressed

suspicion that the Democrat-controlled Legislature aims to pass a bill restricting the right to assemble and that the legislation would target right-wing armed

groups like the Proud Boys and Patriot Prayer, but not black-clad anarchists who have vandalized downtown Portland and battled police.

"This bill would clearly put restrictions on who could gather in a group and for what reasons they chose to," wrote Matthew Holman, a resident of Coos Bay, a town on Oregon's southwest coast.

The pioneering measure raises a host of issues, which lawmakers tried to parse in a House Judiciary Committee hearing last week:

If residents are afraid to go to a park with their children while an armed militia group is present, could they later sue the group? What constitutes a paramilitary group? What is defined as being armed?

Oregon Department of Justice attorney Carson Whitehead said the proposed law would not sanction a person for openly carrying firearms, which is constitutionally permissible. But if a paramilitary group went to a park knowing their presence would be intimidating, anyone afraid of also going to the park could sue for damages, Whitehead said.

"This particular bill is not directed at individuals open-carrying. This is directed at armed, coordinated paramilitary activity," added McCord, who is the executive director of Georgetown University Law Center's Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection.

On the other side of the country in Vermont, a bill making it a crime to operate a paramilitary training camp got final approval from the state Senate on Friday. The measure, which senators earlier approved by a 29-1 vote, also allows state prosecutors to seek an injunction to close such a facility.

"This bill gives the state the authority it needs to protect Vermonters from fringe actors looking to create civil disorder," said state Sen. Philip Baruth, a Democrat and Progressive from Burlington.

Baruth introduced the measure in response to a firearms training facility built without permits in the town of Pawlet. Neighbors frequently complained about gunfire coming from the Slate Ridge facility, calling it a menace. Baruth's bill now goes to the Vermont House.

Under the proposed Oregon law, a paramilitary group could range from ones that wear uniforms and insignia, like the Three Percenters, to a handful of people who act in a coordinated way with a command structure to engage in violence, McCord said.

Rep. Rick Lewis, a Republican from Silverton, asked pointedly during the committee hearing whether rocks and frozen water bottles, which Portland police said had been thrown at them during demonstrations in 2021, would fall under the proposed law.

A frozen water bottle and rocks could cause serious injury or death, so they would be considered dangerous weapons under Oregon law, responded Kimberly McCullough, Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum's legislative director.

Multnomah County District Attorney Mike Schmidt, whose jurisdiction encompasses Portland, testified in favor of the bill, expressing frustration that police often can't single out violent actors lurking among peaceful protesters.

"Our current inability to get upstream of this violence before it starts leaves us vulnerable to organized criminal elements who enter into a protest environment with the express intention of escalating the situation into an assault or arson or a riot," Schmidt said.

McCord, the terrorism expert, said the measure would mark a milestone in the U.S., where the FBI has warned of a rapidly growing threat of homegrown violent extremism.

"This bill as amended would be the most comprehensive statute to address unauthorized paramilitary activity that threatens civil rights," she said. □

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Cities appealing 2020 census count garner only small wins

By MIKE SCHNEIDER
Associated Press

For the U.S. cities and towns that have challenged their 2020 census population figures, the victories have been mostly small. But small turned out to be big for tiny Whiteville, Tennessee.

Of the dozen or so municipalities that have appealed and had the results made public by the U.S. Census Bureau because they say residents were overlooked during the nation's last headcount, the biggest gain so far has been 1,958 residents in Whiteville, which now has a revised population of 4,564 residents and could see a significant boost in the money it gets from the state and federal governments.

Even with just small increases of several hundred residents, cities like Milwaukee are taking what they can get. Wisconsin's largest city recently gained more than 800 residents after it was discovered that inmates at one of the local jails were wrongly assigned to a neighboring city. That challenge was organized with other Wisconsin municipalities. Milwaukee has another appeal still pending, claiming 16,500 residents were overlooked in houses and apartments primarily in communities of color. The



The Milwaukee skyline is pictured on Sept. 6, 2022. For the cities and towns that have challenged their 2020 census population figures, claiming residents within their boundaries were overlooked during the nation's head count three years ago, victories have been mostly small in size.

Associated Press

2020 census put Milwaukee at 577,222 residents, down about 3% from 2010.

"We will take the 817 people to start," said Jeff Fleming, a spokesman for Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson. "We have to fight when they tell us we lost population."

Milwaukee is among the largest U.S. cities to challenge their 2020 census numbers, along with Boston, Detroit and Austin, Texas. Those cases also

are still pending and could produce larger revisions. About six dozen smaller cities, towns and villages have challenged their head count through two Census Bureau programs.

The statistical agency has posted the results for more than a dozen municipalities, with a gain of as few as four people in Cleveland, Georgia, where one additional home was added to the city's boundaries. Kevin Harris, the city's administra-

tor, said the Census Bureau didn't inform local officials where in the city of 3,518 the population gain occurred.

"We simply want an accurate number for our community since this involves the census count and access to resources since so many federal programs are based on population," Harris said in an email on Friday.

A substantial number of revisions involved jails or pris-

ons whose inmates were assigned to the wrong jurisdiction. Those facilities, along with college dorms, nursing homes and military barracks, were among the most difficult places to count as the coronavirus spread throughout the U.S. during crucial weeks for the census in the spring of 2020. Students were sent home from campuses, and prisons and nursing homes went into lockdowns when those residents were supposed to be counted.

Challenging the numbers was frustrating for some city officials, who say the Census Bureau didn't consider nuances of particular cases.

In Kent, Ohio, officials weren't worried about their overall count, but rather undercounts in specific wards, particularly in a neighborhood home to hundreds of Kent State University students who deserted their apartments once remote learning was imposed during the pandemic. The neighborhood saw a construction boom in the last decade.

After the appeal and revision, Kent lost 12 residents to neighboring Franklin township, and the Census Bureau didn't address the city's concerns, said Bridget Susel, Kent's community development director. □

DOJ search of Pence's office turns up no new classified docs

By JILL COLVIN and
ERIC TUCKER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department searched the office of former Vice President Mike Pence's Washington advocacy group for several hours Friday as part of its investigation into the discovery of sensitive documents at the homes and offices of current and former top U.S. officials.

Pence adviser Devin O'Malley said no additional documents with classified markings were discovered during a "thorough and



Former Vice President Mike Pence pauses while speaking at a Coolidge and the American Project luncheon in the Madison Building of the Library of Congress, Thursday, Feb. 16, 2023, in Washington.

Associated Press

unrestricted search" of the office of Advancing American Freedom, the nonprofit group launched by Pence in 2021. One binder believed to be part of Pence's 2020 debate preparations "with approximately three previously redacted documents" was taken by agents.

The search, described as consensual after negotiations between Pence's representatives and the Justice Department, comes one week after the FBI searched Pence's Indiana home and discovered one additional document with

classified markings. That was after lawyers hired by Pence last month discovered what aides have described as a "small number" of potentially sensitive documents they say were inadvertently transported to Pence's home in boxes at the end of the Trump administration.

Pence had asked his lawyers to conduct the search after an outcry over the discovery of classified documents at President Joe Biden's Delaware home and office. He's said repeatedly he was unaware they were there. □

Military finishes recovering Chinese balloon debris

By TARA COPP and LOLITA C. BALDOR

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. has finished efforts to recover the remnants of the large balloon that was shot down off the coast of South Carolina, and analysis of the debris so far reinforces conclusions that it was a Chinese spy balloon, U.S. officials said Friday.

Officials said the U.S. believes that Navy, Coast Guard and FBI personnel collected all of the balloon debris off the ocean floor, which included key equipment from the payload that could reveal what information it was able to monitor and collect. White House national security spokesman John Kirby said a significant amount of debris was recovered and it included "electronics and optics" from the payload. He declined to say what, if anything, the U.S. has learned from the wreckage so far.

U.S. Northern Command



In this image released by the U.S. Navy, sailors assigned to Assault Craft Unit 4 prepare material recovered off the coast of Myrtle Beach, S.C., in the Atlantic Ocean from the shooting down of a Chinese high-altitude balloon, for transport to the FBI, at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek in Virginia Beach, Va., on Feb. 10, 2023.

Associated Press

said in a statement that the recovery operations ended Thursday and the final pieces are on their way to the FBI lab in Virginia for analysis. It said air and mar-

itime restrictions off South Carolina have been lifted. The announcement capped three dramatic weeks that saw U.S. fighter jets shoot down four air-

borne objects the large Chinese balloon on Feb. 4 and three much smaller objects about a week later over Canada, Alaska and Lake Huron. They are

the first known peacetime shootdowns of unauthorized objects in U.S. airspace.

The officials also said the search for the small airborne object that was shot down over Lake Huron has stopped, and nothing has been recovered. U.S. officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss military operations. The U.S. and Canada have also failed to recover any debris so far from the other two objects which were shot down over the Yukon and northern Alaska.

While the military is confident the balloon shot down off South Carolina was a surveillance airship operated by China, the Biden administration has admitted that the three smaller objects were likely civilian-owned balloons that were targeted during the heightened response, after U.S. homeland defense radars were recalibrated to detect slower moving airborne items. □

Trump lawyers try to ban 'Access Hollywood' tape from trial

By LARRY NEUMEISTER

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Attorneys for Donald Trump want to ban from his upcoming civil rape trial the "Access Hollywood" tape in which the former president boasts graphically about how celebrities can molest women.

Trump attorneys Alina Hab-

ba and Michael Madaio filed papers in Manhattan federal court late Thursday seeking to block references to the 2005 taped encounter and the tape itself from an April trial stemming from the claims of longtime advice columnist E. Jean Carroll.

They called the tape "irrelevant and highly prejudi-

cial" and said it might unjustly be used to suggest to jurors that Trump had a propensity for sexual assault and therefore must have raped Carroll. They also asked to prevent testimony from two women who have accused Trump of sexual misconduct and to ban references to his campaign speeches.

Carroll, 79, sued Trump in November after New York state temporarily changed laws to allow adult rape victims to sue their abusers, even if the attacks occurred decades ago. A trial is set for April 24, and Trump and Carroll are both expected to testify.

Carroll, a former columnist for Elle magazine, said in her 2019 book "What Do We Need Men For?" that Trump raped her in late 1995 or early 1996 in the dressing room of Bergdorf Goodman, a luxury Manhattan department store.

Trump has vehemently denied it, sometimes angrily, in public statements.

In an October deposition for the upcoming trial, Trump was dismissive of Carroll's claims, saying: "Physically she's not my type," though he misidentified her as an ex-wife of his when he was shown a photograph.

Carroll's lawyer, Roberta Kaplan, confronted him with claims that two dozen other women have made against him, asking if any of them are true.

"I would say, I mean, I don't see any."

I mean, you haven't shown me anything," Trump responded, according to the transcript.

His answers might increase the relevance of lewd comments he made on the "Access Hollywood" tape, which was revealed just weeks before he won the November 2016 presidential election.

In the tape, he said that sometimes when he sees beautiful women: "I just start kissing them. It's like a magnet. Just kiss. I don't even wait." And he added that, "When you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything," including grabbing women between their legs.

Afterward, he issued a rare apology, saying the comments were "locker room banter" caught on a hot mic.

In her lawsuit, Carroll said she had a chance encounter with Trump that escalated into playful banter as he asked her to help him pick out lingerie for a friend. She said they teased each other to try on a piece of lingerie and went into the dressing room, where Trump became violent and raped her.

Her lawyer declined to comment Friday. □



In this March 4, 2020, file photo, E. Jean Carroll talks to reporters outside a courthouse in New York.

Associated Press

Flurry of activity signals deal is near on Brexit trade feud

By JILL LAWLESS
Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The U.K., the European Union and Northern Ireland's bitterly divided political parties said Friday that progress was being made on resolving a post-Brexit trade dispute that brought economic headaches and political turmoil to the region. A flurry of political and diplomatic activity signaled a potential breakthrough after months of talks and political gridlock. British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak flew to Belfast for talks with political leaders, and Foreign Secretary James Cleverly met EU chief negotiator Maroš Šefčovič in Brussels.

"Intensive work continues," Cleverly tweeted. Šefčovič posted: "Constructive engagement. Good progress."

Sunak is also due to discuss Brexit with other European leaders this weekend on the margins of the Munich Security Conference in Germany.

Any deal faces a tough audience: unionist politicians who want Northern Ireland to remain part of the U.K. collapsed the Belfast power-sharing government almost a year ago because



From left, Gordon Lyons MLA, Gavin Robinson MP, Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP and Emma Little-Pengelly MLA speak to the media outside the Culloden Hotel where Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is holding talks with Stormont leaders over the Northern Ireland Protocol, in Belfast, Northern Ireland, Friday Feb. 17, 2023.

of their opposition to the existing trade arrangements with the EU.

However, Jeffrey Donaldson, leader of the biggest unionist group, the Democratic Unionist Party, was unusually upbeat after his meeting with Sunak in Belfast. "On some very important issues, I think there has been real progress, but there remain some outstanding issues that that

we need to get over the line," Donaldson said. "We will then examine the final text of any agreement and come to our decision."

Irish nationalist party Sinn Féin generally approves of the post-Brexit trade rules. But party leader Mary Lou McDonald said Friday it was "very much game on" for a deal to resolve the dispute over them.

"It's clear now that sig-

nificant progress has been made, and we're very heartened by that," she said.

Northern Ireland is the only part of the U.K. that shares a border with an EU member nation, the Republic of Ireland. When the U.K. left the bloc in 2020, the British government and the EU agreed to keep the Irish border free of customs posts and other checks be-

cause an open border is a key pillar of the peace process that ended 30 years of violence in Northern Ireland.

Instead, there are checks on some goods entering Northern Ireland from the rest of the U.K. British unionist politicians there are fiercely opposed to the arrangements, known as the Northern Ireland Protocol. Unionists say the new trade border undermines Northern Ireland's place in the United Kingdom, and are refusing to return to government until the trade rules are redrawn.

Britain has sought to change the agreement to eliminate most of the customs checks. For months, U.K.-EU talks went nowhere in an atmosphere of mistrust and recrimination. Britain threatened to unilaterally rip up parts of the Brexit agreement, and the EU accused the U.K. of failing to honor the legally binding treaty it had signed.

But the mood has improved since Sunak, a pragmatic supporter of Brexit, took office in late October, replacing pugnacious predecessors Boris Johnson and Liz Truss, who delighted in riling the EU. □

Associated Press

Taiwan reports Chinese balloon found on northern island

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Taiwan's Defense Ministry says a Chinese weather balloon landed on one of its outlying islands, amid U.S. accusations that such craft have been dispatched worldwide to spy on Washington and its allies.

The ministry's statement on Thursday said the balloon carried equipment registered to a state-owned electronics company in the northern city of Taiyuan.

The islet where it was found, Tungyin, is part of the Matsu island ground lying just off the coast of China's Fujian province. Taiwan maintained control of the islands after the sides split in 1949 amid civil war and they are considered a first line of defense should China make

good on its threats to bring Taiwan under its control by force if necessary.

Reached by phone, a publicity officer at the company, identified in the report as Taiyuan Wireless (Radio) First Factory Ltd., said it had provided electronics but had not built the balloon.

The spokesperson, who gave only his surname, Liu, said Taiyuan was among a number of companies that provided equipment to the China Meteorological Administration.

The balloon was likely among those launched daily to monitor weather and was probably set off from the coastal city of Xiamen with no fixed course, he said.

Its deflation was likely a nat-

ural outcome of it having reached maximum altitude of around 30,000 meters (almost 100,000 feet), Liu said. Such balloons regularly fly over the Taiwan Strait but have only recently begun to draw attention, he said. Information on the equipment was written in the simplified Chinese characters used on the mainland rather than the traditional on Taiwan, Taiwan's Defense Ministry said.

China regularly sends military aircraft and warships into Taiwan air identification zone and across the middle line of the Taiwan Strait. That has prompted Taiwan to boost military purchases from the U.S., expand domestic production of local planes, submarines

and fighting ships, and extend compulsory military service for all males.

Washington is Taiwan's

closest military and diplomatic ally, despite a lack of formal ties, which were cut in 1979. □



A view from the 220-meter (670 feet) summit of Mt. Bi looks down on the airport's single runway jutting out into the sea on Beigan in the Matsu island group, off northern Taiwan, Aug. 22, 2012.

Associated Press

U.N. draft resolution demands halt to Israeli settlements

By **EDITH M. LEDERER** and
MATTHEW LEE

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — A Palestinian-backed U.N. resolution that could be put to a vote in the Security Council early next week would demand an immediate halt to all Israeli settlement activities, condemn Israeli attempts to annex settlements and outposts, "and call for their immediate reversal."

In Washington, the State Department said it believed the resolution as drafted was "unhelpful," but declined to say if it would veto the document or try to water it down to avoid a contentious vote. Council diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity because talks were private, said the U.S. was seeking to replace the resolution, which would be legally binding, with a weaker presidential statement. The push for a vote on the draft resolution, a copy of which was obtained Thursday by The Associated Press, comes as Israel's new right-wing government has reaffirmed its commitment to construct new settlements in the West Bank and expand its authority in the lands that the Palestinians



Israeli troops demolish the house of Palestinian Muhammed Kamel al-Jabari, who carried out a deadly shooting attack last year that killed one Israeli, in the West Bank city of Hebron, Thursday, Feb. 16, 2023.

Associated Press

seek for a future state. Israel captured the West Bank, along with east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, in the 1967 Mideast war. The United Nations and most of the international community consider Israeli settlements illegal and an obstacle to ending the decades-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Some 700,000 Israeli settlers live in the West Bank and Israeli-annexed east Jeru-

salem. Ultrationalists who oppose Palestinian statehood comprise a majority of Israel's new government, which has declared settlement construction a top priority. Finance Minister Bezael Smotrich has vowed to "normalize" life in the West Bank, erasing the differences between living in a settlement and within Israel's internationally recognized border, and effec-

tively annexing West Bank territory. The draft resolution, circulated by the United Arab Emirates, the Arab representative on the council, would reaffirm the Security Council's "unwavering commitment" to a two-state solution with Israel and Palestine living side-by-side in peace as democratic states. It would also reaffirm the U.N. Charter's provision

against acquiring territory by force and reaffirm that any such acquisition is illegal.

On Tuesday, top diplomats from the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy condemned Israel's plans to build 10,000 new homes in existing settlements in the West Bank and retroactively legalize nine outposts. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Cabinet announced the measure Sunday, following a surge in violence in Jerusalem.

U.S. deputy State Department spokesman Vedant Patel told reporters in Washington on Thursday: "The introduction of this resolution is unhelpful in supporting the conditions necessary to advance negotiations for a two-state solution."

Patel added that Israel's recent decision to expand settlements and legalize previously illegal settlement outposts was also "unhelpful."

Secretary of State Antony Blinken made that point directly to Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas during a visit to Israel and the West Bank earlier this month, U.S. officials have said.

Presidents of Colombia, Venezuela sign trade deal on border

By **MANUEL RUEDA**

Associated Press

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) —

The presidents of Colombia and Venezuela met on their border Thursday to sign an agreement designed to improve trade between the two countries and lift import duties on dozens of manufactured goods. The deal comes as relations between the two countries improve following the election of Colombia's first leftist president. Recently Colombia and Venezuela opened their border bridges to commercial cargo trucks for the first time in seven years.

"This is not only about making trade easier, but also about making it easier for

people to move between both countries," Colombi-

an President Gustavo Petro said. "There has to be legal-

ity here, so that the rights of people are protected."

Trade between Colombia and Venezuela fell drastically after 2015 amid political disputes that led to frequent border closures.

In 2019, Venezuela's socialist president, Nicolas Maduro, shut the border for months, had shipping containers put on bridges connecting the countries and cut off diplomatic ties.

Maduro acted after Colombia's then conservative government and the United States recognized Venezuelan opposition politician Juan Guaido as Venezuela's legitimate leader and tried to help him to bring truckloads of humanitarian aid into the

cash-strapped country.

Last year, Colombia and Venezuela renewed diplomatic relations following the election of Petro as Colombia's president.

Petro has recognized Maduro as Venezuela's legitimate leader and moved away from U.S. led efforts to isolate Venezuela's authoritarian government.

Colombia's new president has said that he would like to convince Venezuela to rejoin the interamerican system of human rights, and has also asked Venezuela to assist Colombia's efforts to broker a peace deal with the National Liberation Army, a rebel group that is present on both sides of the border.



In this photo released by the Colombian Presidential Press Office, Colombia's President Gustavo Petro, left, and Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro, right, meet before signing a bilateral agreements at the International Bridge Atanasio Girardot, on the border between Venezuela and Colombia, Thursday, Feb.16, 2023.

Associated Press

Aruba Airport Authority: project Gateway 50% executed

(Oranjestad)—Yesterday, Aruba Airport Authority (AAA) held a press conference to give updates about project Gateway 2030. During this press conference, the minister of Tourism and representatives present visited the construction site.

Before stepping on to the construction site, the minister and the executive director of AAA Joost Meijis, along with the project team and press were all given safety vests from the Project Management Office (PMO), who is also involved in the realization of project Gateway 2030.

The director of development and technology at AAA, Gilbert Rafeal, was accompanied by the PMO team consisting of Mr. Henry Balentin, Sr. project director; Mr. Gerard Turk, resident engineer and Mr. Gerko Rijkers. Representatives from the ABC Project Venture contracting company provided the minister with information on the recent updates in the project during the course of Phase 1A and the schedule to complete this project on time.

Concerning the other phases of the project, ba-



sic components of each phase has been expanded upon and explained.

"We are happy and proud to present Minister Oduber with the latest advancements of project Gateway 2030, which is now in its first phase of development. The goal is to complete this first phase by the third trimester of 2024, and begin the next phase in that same year," Joost Meijis stated.

Phase 1A of the project—which has been ongoing for a year and a half now—primarily includes the expansion of the building for U.S. check-ins. In the future, this area will become the main check-in terminal for all outgoing travelers.

According to Rafael, Phase 1A consists of approximately 200 employees working

on the site, including those from the AAA, the contractor company, and other parties that either directly or indirectly work on this phase.

This phase also includes the development and installation of baggage handling systems and the new zone for luggage preparations. Phase 1B includes the expansion of the current gate 8 area and the creation of two waiting rooms that will be connected to three contact gates and one embarking gate. At the same time, Rafael also mentioned that they have also considered the matter of sustainability as part of their strategy. Infrastructures for solar panels and reusable rain water for bathrooms are among the few factors they have implemented



in the project as a way to achieve this.

The next phases in the project are already in the process of evaluation and will be included in the project. This includes, for example, a new concession area where all gates for American flights are connected, new installations for arrivals and the extension of the service area at the terminal.

Minister Oduber expressed that they have been given extensive information on the project. He also announced that project Gateway is already 50% in its execution phase, where they are currently keeping up with planning in order to complete the project on time.

Minister Oduber has as-

sured that Phase 1A of the project is an investment of 143 million dollar. After this, they will continue with Phase 1B, Phase 2 and Phase 3. As the minister stated, "this project is very important for our tourism and our economy, keeping in mind the limitations in capacity that we are currently experiencing, as well as the increase in hotel rooms from hotels that are currently in construction. This is why it is also necessary that we amplify our airport and ensure good infrastructure to comply with the wishes of our guests."

At the same time, he pointed out that this project is being executed by local contractors, which can be an example for other local contractors to pursue more projects. □

Mikayla Ruiz crowned as Queen Ritz Carlton Aruba

(Oranjestad)—On Wednesday evening, the election for Grand Carnival Queen and Madam Carnival of the Ritz Carlton Aruba Hotel was held. A total of 9 contestants—5 competing for the Madam Carnival title and 4 others for the Grand Queen title—performed and presented their speech for the ultimate titles of the Ritz Carlton Aruba Queens.

For the first time, Ritz Carlton Aruba organized a queen election, which was held in the hotel's ballroom and was attended by a big crowd. The candidates' family, friends and colleagues united to show their support for their candidate.

For both titles, awards were given for the titles of Most Popular Queen; Queen QR (online voting), Best Costume; Best Speech; Best



Show; Runner-ups and of course, Queen.

For the category of Madam Carnival, the winner was Orelis Kelly, who is representing Casino Tables. She was also awarded with the title of Best Speech.

For the category of Grand Queen, the winner was Mikayla Ruiz, representing Meetings & Special Events. Ruiz also snatched the awards for Most Popular, Queen QR, Best

Speech, Best Show and Best Costume.

In terms of entertainment, the carnival group Tsunami headlined the event, and all guests were seen enjoying the ambience from beginning to end.

It is also worth mentioning that the theme of recycling really out in the contestants' costumes, where their creativity was front and center. □



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Noord – Sometimes all we need is one place where we can do all our shopping at once. Well, Do it center and Super Do it Center Groceries has it all. This is the largest, local owned Do it Center in the Caribbean and best of all a 100% locally owned family business.

How it all began

It was 1938 when Mr. Eric Ponson started his journey at General Store. Ponson did not hesitate and decided to buy General Store. Buying a store and thus going from employee to owner of a business with a debt of 11.000 guilders was not an easy task.

As the saying goes: "Behind every successful man, is a strong woman". In the case of Ponson, this was no different. As General Store progressed and slowly became successful, Mrs. Irene Ponson, came in to assist her husband. Irene Ponson is a visionary, she knew exactly where and how to invest and within a short amount of time in 1970, General Store moved to a better location at the Steenweg. This allowed for a lot more merchandise, products and employees. Supply and de-

mand was as such, that General Store became the number 1 electrical business. Business kept going so well that the location at the Steenweg became too small and was moved later to Dakota Shopping Paradise and later to Pedro Gallego Straat. With this move, an expansion was decided upon and an electronics store in Savaneta was opened. General Store still being very successful was ready for more growth.

Ricky, Kenneth, Corine and Frans are the fruits of this marriage. Kenneth and Frans however, decided to further develop their father's legacy and continued with their mother's dream to expand the business. An expansion not in square feet only, but in merchandise as well. A great opportunity presented itself when the Ponson family was able to buy a piece of property across from the airport. In 2007 the Ponson family moved into their brand new and huge building

After a successful opening and expansion, Kenneth and Frans who inherited their mother's vision, decided that General Store was ready for yet another ex-



pansion. With the support of Mr. Tom Barfell and management of Do it Best in the States, the construction of Do it Center commenced.

Fast forward to today. A Do it Center in Aruba, with more than 50.000 top of the line items for interior as well exterior use, building materials, STO products and a top of the line grocery store. Perseverance, responsibility, vision and the courage to invest have made Ponson's General Store as successful as it is today.

Super Do It Center Shaba & Groceries

Located in Shaba, Noord. This is the last sibling of the Do It Center family. Here you will be able to find anything you are looking for. The building is divided into several departments from home to hardware to groceries. Everything under one roof.

Groceries? Visit the fully stocked supermarket with fresh fruits and vegetables and high class meat selections. Highly known products and brands are here for you to grab. Every week Do It Center Groceries offers its weekly spe-

cial on selected items. Weekly specials are very popular and a perfect chance for you to buy your favorite products at a reduced price.

Need a home makeover?

Do not skip the furniture department "Leenbakker". Here, you will find a divine collection of European furniture, worldwide known for their modern and stylish features for your bedroom, bathroom, living room or kitchen. For your garden they have a wide selection of durable furniture specially made for our tropical climate. Take a walk around and find some treasures. Find the perfect accessory for your house, fitted for your personality and style. Modern, elegant, retro industrial, whatever your style is you will definitely find something for your personal taste.

Do it Center Shaba is open from Monday to Saturday from 8AM to 8PM and on Sunday's from 9AM to 6PM.

For more information go to www.doit.aw



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Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa

EAGLE BEACH - Recently, Aruba Tourism Authority representative Ms. Olga Ruiz had the great pleasure in honoring many loyal Aruba visitors with their distinctive certificates. These certificates are a way to say "Masha Danki" for continuously choosing Aruba as a favorite vacation destination. The titles are as following: 10+ years "Distinguished Visitor", 20+ years "Goodwill Ambassador" and 36+ years "Emerald Ambassador".

The honorees are Christine Madden and (in loving memory of) James Madden, residents of Nebraska, United States who have been honored as Emerald Ambassadors of Aruba.

This symbolic honorary title is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba between the 10-20-35 and more consecutive year mark.

The top reasons for returning to Aruba that the honoree provided was the friendly people, the amazing weather, the hotel and staff, the beach and the restaurants.

Ms. Olga Ruiz representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and members of Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa bestowed the certification of the Emerald Ambassador. The honoree was presented the Emerald Ambassador Certificate



and memorable gifts.

On behalf of the Government of Aruba, we would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to Mrs. Madden for making Aruba her preferred vacation destination for so many years. We are so thankful to have had Mrs. Madden as our visitor all these years! Aruba is unquestionably her home away from home! ☐

Aruba to me



ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials,

as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Barbara Vernon. She wrote to us saying; "Aruba to me is sun, sand, family and friends!" She sent this sweet message along with a fun photo of "The Gang" Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! ☐

**beauty
& THE
BEACH**

Aruba Today is delighted to share to its readers a new segment called "Beauty and the Beach", where we take a minute to honor our guests who have decided to spend their vacation on our beautiful and warm island.

In this edition, we'd like to give a shout out **Mirco e Badia from Italy and his partner**, who are enjoying their vacation on the beautiful white sands of Aruba's beaches. Aruba is always proud to host all families and guests. We at Aruba Today encourage any visitor of the island to send in their pictures and/or messages; who knows? You might get on the cover!



Alhambra
CASINO AND SHOPS
casinoalhambra.com



Short history of the beginnings of baseball in Aruba

ORANJESTAD — Baseball was played on the island of Aruba in the 1930's, but only by United States expatriates working for LAGO and living inside the LAGO colony. Jim Bluejacket, the legendary US Indian who had played in two major league teams, worked for LAGO during 14 years and was a key factor in the growth of the popularity of the game in the colony. There is no record of Bluejacket ever playing outside the colony.



Outside the colony, the game of baseball was introduced to Aruba by Venezuelan immigrants and sailors on the Venezuelan fishing boats that used Aruba as their home port. They formed pick-up teams and played games on Sundays on an open field behind what is now the Court of Justice. One of the Venezuelans that comes to mind is Felix Garrido, grandfather of our current Prime-Minister.



In the late 30s the leader of this group was Raúl Aparicio, a cousin of Luis Aparicio who is now enshrined in the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. The Aparicios were evidently very good at sports. Raúl had two brothers who also played baseball, René and Roman. Rosendo, his only brother who did not play baseball became a professional soccer player in the Venezuelan league. Rosendo was nicknamed "Cabeza de oro" (golden head) for a memorable header he scored to win a game for his team.



Interestingly, it was in Aruba that Luis Aparicio played his first game outside of Venezuela. This took place in 1950 when he played shortstop for the school he attended. Later he played for "Cabimas" in a double-header of the Venezuelan Western League. These official games of the league were authorized to be played in Aruba by the Professional Baseball Organization of Venezuela. Several others who played



in those games have also been enshrined.

Luis Aparicio's father was the super popular Luis "El Grande" (the great one) after whom the baseball stadium in Maracaibo is named. He and his brother owned the professional baseball teams "Gavilanes" which later became the "Aguilas", and the "Cabimas".

In the early '40s, another group, mostly immigrants from the Dominican Republic also became very active with pickup teams. Some of these remained active in baseball well into the early '50s; as umpires, managers even as players. Among these were Nestor "Pantin" Guerrero who also had a musical band. Perhaps not so coincidentally, many of Pantin's players were also musicians. Luthai Pantophlet who umpired many years was a well-known drummer. Gaston Hazel was a bongo player; José Bryson and the brothers Nicholson, Teddy and Julio, all played several instruments.

In San Nicolas, baseball was played on the grounds next to where the LAGO Sport Park (now Laveist Sport Park) was officially inaugurated in March 1941.

During the WWII years, baseball got a big lift from the influx of Puerto Rican and US soldiers stationed here. As LAGO was playing a very important role in the struggle against Hitler, it was able to get all the sports equipment needed here to allow more people to participate.

In the '40s only the Lago Sports Park organized baseball championship games. The first teams to participate were Artraco, (Aruba Trading Co.), Esso Garage and Botica San Lucas. In 1945 Venezuelan employees of the Lago refinery participated under the name of "Cafenol", a very popular Venezuelan coffee brand. Two other groups of Venezuelan im-



migrants formed the teams "Cerveceria" (named after the iconic team Cerveceria Caracas), and "Venezuela", although not all members of these teams were Venezuelans. This was also the year that the team sponsored by Roxy Café started to play as "Dodgers". Dodgers became the dominant baseball powerhouse till the 1950s.

Other teams that entered the baseball scene in the late 1940s: Pepsi Cola (Oranjestad) and St. Thomas Boys (former students of St. Thomas College, Oranjestad). "Baby Ruth" in San Nicolas played initially under the name "Camel" and "Barnes' Ramblers" the only team consisting of Lago Colony players to participate in the Lago Sport Park championships. "Red Rock Cola" was formed in Oranjestad in 1950. In 1952 the team Pepsi Cola became "Nesbitt's" and had players of seven countries, including two American expats from Lago Colony.

In 1950 a group of prominent members of the Aruba community founded the Amateur Baseball Bond of Aruba (ABBA) to give structure to the management of the sport and became the organizers of official championship games. While maintaining the existing teams in a league that was referred to as A-class, ABBA established a B-class league in which the "Budweiser" and "Braves" played the first years.

By 1952 Aruba became a member of the International Amateur Baseball Association and fielded a team

managed by Joe Proterra, (former pitcher of "Barnes' Ramblers"), that would play for the first time ever in the Amateur Baseball World Series that took place in Havana, Cuba in September. Surprisingly, Aruba won two of its six games and became the darling of the Havana fans. Nell Harms of the Aruban team was named the "Outstanding player of the week" for his performance against Honduras. He allowed just two hits, struck out 15 and hit the only homerun of the game. Joe Cambria, the famous scout for the Washington Senators offered him a contract, but Nel was not interested, but the next year, at the Amateur Baseball World Series in Caracas, Venezuela, Nel and Ruben Phillips did sign and in 1954 they played professional baseball the Georgia-Florida League and the Texas-New Mexico League. They were the first Arubans to play professionally, but not the only ones.

During the games in Havana, contacts were made with the organizers of Little League Baseball in Cuba which eventually resulted in the introduction of Little League in Aruba. Little League of Aruba has been extremely successful: It has produced many players who earned baseball scholarships at universities in the United States, a few who played professionally in the Netherlands and different countries in the Caribbean and five who reached the major leagues: Calvin Maduro, Eugene Kingsale, Radhames Dijkhoff, Sydney Ponson, and Xander Bogaerts one of the brightest stars of Boston Red Sox. □

Richard Jacobs: from footballer to international cameraman to multimedia lecturer in Aruba



ORANJESTAD – Richard E. Jacobs Jr. is currently a guest lecturer in multimedia at Ibero American High School. Jacobs has a long and successful trajectory in the world of television; but before entering television, his first love was soccer. In an interview with our reporter, Jacobs tells a bit about his career in soccer and multimedia.

From a young age, because his father played soccer, Jacobs followed in his father's footsteps and

began playing soccer too. At a young age he moved to the Netherlands and from that moment continued developing in his sport. Half of his career was in the Netherlands where he played for big teams. Afterwards he came back to Aruba and played in various youth teams and represented Aruba in Santo Domingo, among others.

Jacobs says that during his soccer career he won different individual awards. Among others, he won go-

algetter in a championship twice, and was MVP of a championship twice. He also won best striker.

During the 1990s, he was part of Aruba's national team, representing our island in elimination games for the World Cup in 1994, 1998 and 2002. He was also part of the Aruba team for the Caribbean Championship Shell Cup, and in the year 2000 he was part of the Aruban team that beat the Puerto Rican team 4-2.

Jacobs studied in the electrical sector in Aruba and after finishing his studies in Aruba he moved to the Netherlands to continue studying electronica. During his studies in the Netherlands, Jacobs says, there was a department that would photograph and film here and there, but mostly photograph. He went to experience this, and loved it so much that he started participating. "I started going deeper into it. For filming, I began when I was 14, filming various activities around Aruba with a big camera. I always liked filming. That's how I started, and as I grew up I gained more experience."

Jacobs worked in TeleAruba, and after that he got the opportunity to work in ATV and at this time he



gained a lot of experience in the world of television.

Internationally, he worked at different TV stations and programs. He says that he worked with CNN, Fox, NBC, as cameraman for the Larry King show, and he worked as cameraman also for Nancy Grace at that time.

The transition from television to school happened because his two daughters attended Ibero American High School, and during the years they were enrolled, they realized that he was doing multimedia work and the school approached him to start teaching in the MultiMedia department in order to introduce the subject to the students. "They found accreditation for this and after six years teaching, this is the only school that is currently giving complete multimedia lessons," Jacobs emphasized.

"You learn everything regarding filming, editing, you learn video editing, and you learn to work with Photoshop, restore images, make posters, you learn everything regarding social media. We also teach the technical aspect a bit of the work of IT", he added.

Finalizing, Jacobs says that what he likes the most about teaching at the school is inspiring the kids, who have an open window to the world of multimedia. "Maybe you are a very creative person, you can do a lot with multimedia and what I like is that when I give an assignment, I want for them to do it the best that they can, better than me. The goal is to push these children to use their creativity and experience the world of multimedia, through which they can express themselves in different ways." □



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 42 Diner

1 Barn patron

area 43 Steak

5 Obsessed choice

captain 44 Fabric

9 Major worker

mistake

10 Vein

settings

12 Elroy's

dog

13 Sun

Valley

setting

14 Tendency

16 Reunion

group

17 Pert talk

18 What

a jeté

involves

20 Increase

22 Cuts off

23 Showy

flower

25 Prepares

for battle

28 Wild

32 Car option

34 Through

35 — es

Salaam

36 In front

38 Car of

the '50s

40 Road

incline

41 Treatment

center



Yesterday's answer

DOWN

1 Go

ballistic

2 Like some

books

3 Plant with

fronds

4 Cressida's

love

5 Juanita's

friend

6 Stashed

7 Luke's

father

8 Trailing

9 Pool

need

11 Album

tracks

15 Triton

orbits it

19 Sassy

to go

21 Fail to fail

24 Set to wed

25 Birch's

cousin

26 Book

buyer

27 Mason of

movies

29 Take to

the sky

30 Caretaker

31 Raring

to go

33 "You don't

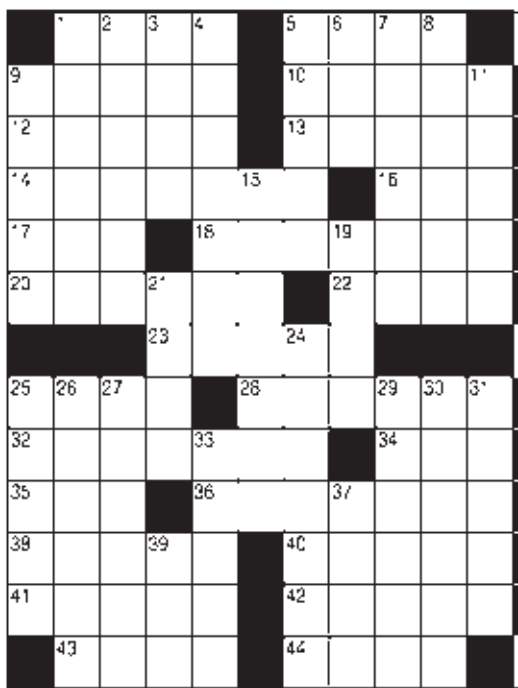
say!"

37 Simple

cart

39 Stirrup

setting



2-18

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

2-18

CRYPTOQUOTE

WDINAD GNT JFAAG F LDAQNZ.

GNT QMNTYB IPAQE JFRD EMDJ

TQD F ONJLTEDA HPEM QYNH

PZEDAZDE EN QDD HMN EMDG

ADFYYG FAD. — HPYY IDAADYY

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN. NAKED PEOPLE HAVE LITTLE OR NO INFLUENCE IN SOCIETY. MARK TWAIN

How climate change can impact your finances

By SPENCER TIERNEY of NerdWallet

Kristy Jiayi Xu got an unwelcome surprise this New Year's Eve: The roof of her garage was leaking during a severe rainstorm in San Francisco. Delays in getting a contractor to fix the roof has brought unexpected costs to keep things dry, including a dehumidifier.

"My husband and I are both from the East Coast, so we always think the rain here lasts for a day," says Xu, certified financial planner and CEO of the firm Global Wealth Harbor.

In September 2022, she and her husband faced a heat wave another weather incident they weren't expecting. "We have air conditioning, but the bill was so high," she says. For over a decade, scientific reports have shown how climate change will likely make extreme weather events more frequent. And this trend might affect your



Contractors for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers pump sand from the ocean floor onto the beach in the Rockaway Peninsula in New York City on, Oct. 18, 2022. They are crafting a 250-foot wide sandy beach along more than seven miles of shoreline to help protect the city from storms and rising sea levels.

Associated Press

wallet. Let's break it down.
HIGHER INSURANCE DEDUCTIBLES AND ADDITIONAL POLICIES

More storms typically mean more risk of damage to your home or car. And getting enough home and other insurance at a reasonable cost can be its own challenge.

Competition among insurers is shrinking in areas most vulnerable to climate change, which means higher prices for consumers, especially higher deductibles, says Amy Bach, executive director of United Policyholders, a non-profit that advocates for insurance consumers. □

Schiphol airport slumps to net loss in 2022 marked by chaos



Travelers wait in long lines outside the terminal building to check in and board flights at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport, Netherlands, on June 21, 2022.

Associated Press

AMSTERDAM (AP) — The company that owns one of Europe's busiest aviation hubs, Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport, slumped to a net loss of 77 million euros (\$82 million) last year as months of travel chaos hit its bottom line.

"Never before in Schiphol's history have we disappointed so many travelers and airlines as in 2022," CEO Ruud Sondag said in a statement Friday.

The busy airport on the outskirts of the Dutch capital was one of several across Europe that was hit by staff shortages and soaring demand as air travel rebounded strongly from two years of COVID-19 restrictions. Airlines and airports slashed jobs during the pandemic, making it difficult to quickly ramp back up to serve the new burst of travelers. □

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24/7

Study: Don't blame climate change for South American drought

By SETH BORENSTEIN
AP Science Writer

Climate change isn't causing the multi-year drought that is devastating parts of Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil and Bolivia, but warming is worsening some of the dry spell's impacts, a new study says.

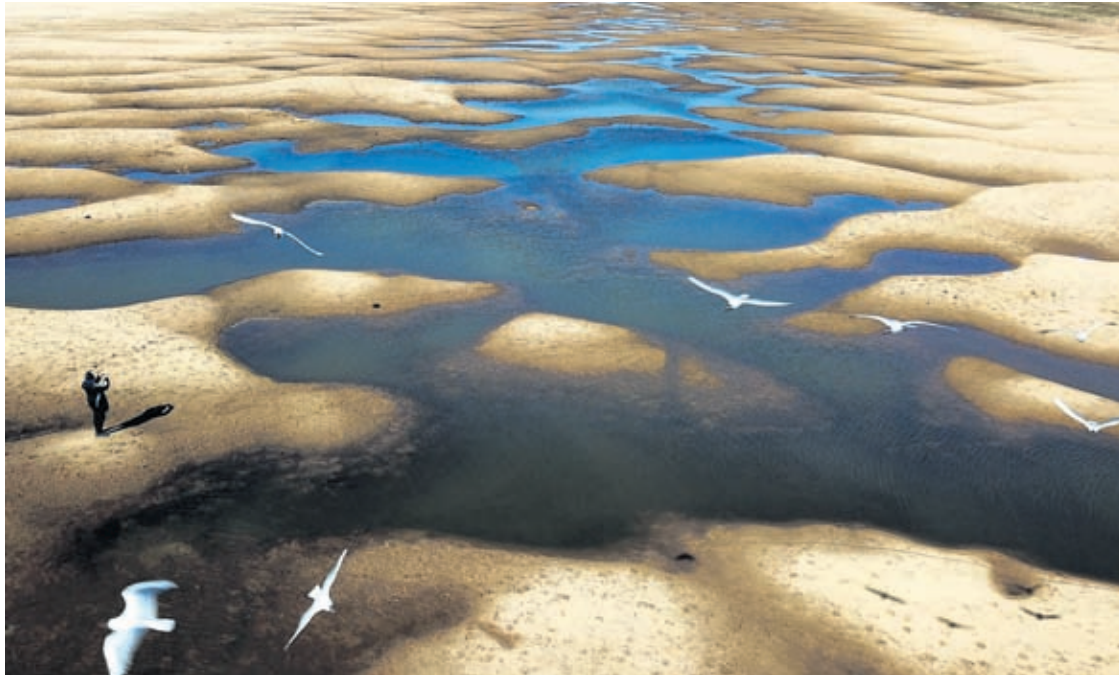
The natural three-year climate condition La Nina – a cooling of the central Pacific that changes weather worldwide temporarily but lasted much longer than normal this time – is the chief culprit in a drought that has devastated central South America and is still going on, according to a flash study released Thursday by international scientists at World Weather Attribution. The study has not been peer reviewed yet.

Drought has hit the region since 2019 with last year seeing the driest year in Central Argentina since 1960, widespread crop failures and Uruguay declaring an agricultural emergency in October. Water supplies and transportation were hampered, too.

"There is no climate change signal in the rainfall," said study co-author Friederike Otto of the Grantham Institute at Imperial College in London. "But of course, that doesn't mean that climate change doesn't play an important role in the context of these droughts. Because of the extreme increase in heat that we see, the soils do dry faster and the impacts are more severe they would have otherwise been."

The heat has increased the evaporation of what little water there is, worsened a natural water shortage and added to crop destruction, scientists said. The same group of scientists found that climate change made the heat wave last December 60 times more likely.

And cutting down trees in the southern Amazon in 2020 reached the highest rate in a decade and that translates to less moisture being available farther south in Argentina, said



Birds fly over a man taking photos of the exposed riverbed of the Old Parana River, a tributary of the Parana River, during a drought in Rosario, Argentina, on July 29, 2021.

Associated Press

study lead author Paola Arias, a climate scientist and professor at the Environmental School of the University of Antioquia in Colombia.

The team of scientists at World Weather Attribution use observations and climate models to see if they find a climate change factor in how frequent or how strong extreme weather is. They compare what happened to how often it happened in the past, and they run computer simulations that contrast reality to what would have happened in a world without human-caused climate change from burning of

fossil fuels.

In this drought's case, the models actually show a slight, not significant, increase in moisture from climate change but a clear connection to La Nina, which scientists say is waning. It will still take months if not longer for the region to get out of the drought and that depends on whether the flip side of La Nina El Nino appears, said study co-author Juan Rivera, a scientist at the Argentine Institute for Snow Research, Glaciology and Environmental Sciences.

In the past, the team of scientists has found no obvious climate change

connection in some droughts and floods, but they do find global warming is a factor in most of the severe weather they investigate. □



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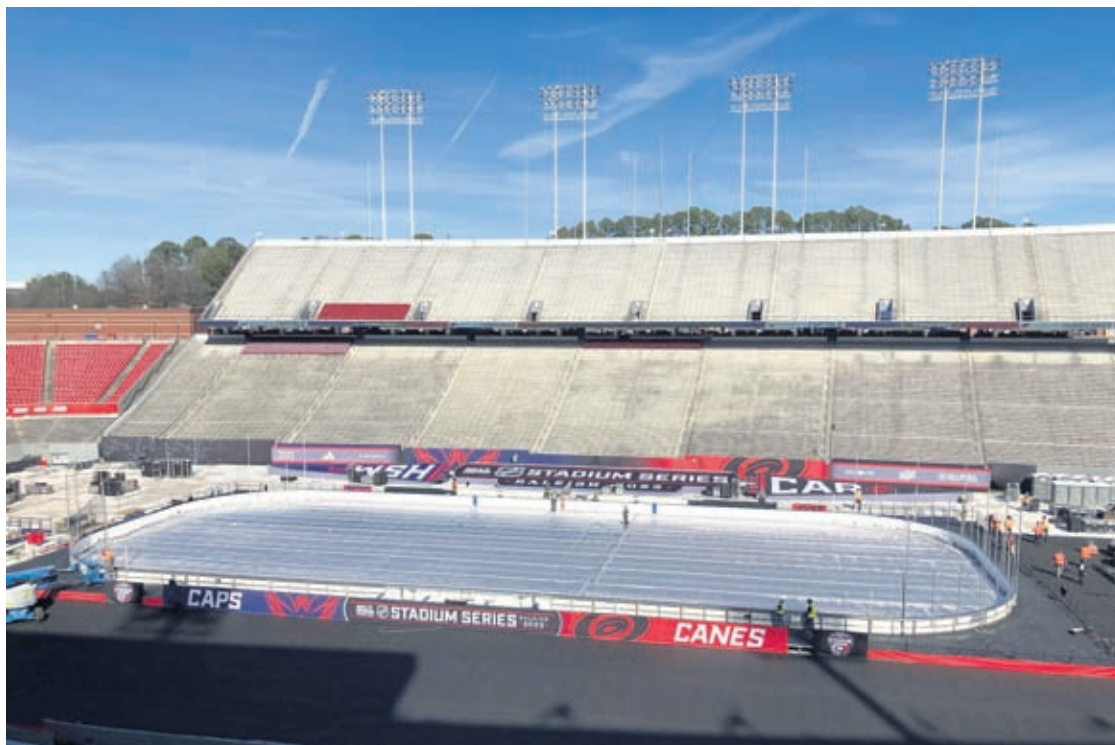
Hurricanes' outdoor game marks another Sun Belt push for NHL

By **AARON BEARD**
 AP Sports Writer

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — The Carolina Hurricanes were days away from hosting an NHL Stadium Series outdoor game and Don Waddell was feeling the stress of hoping that everything goes smoothly and the thrill of the opportunity ahead. It's the same mix of emotions for NHL organizers, too.

"It's very exciting because we're going to expose the game of hockey to a lot of people in the region here that have never been exposed to our game," said Waddell, Carolina's president and general manager.

The Hurricanes face the Washington Capitals in Saturday night's game at Carter-Finley Stadium, home to North Carolina State's college football team and just across the street from their home ice at PNC Arena. The game, delayed two years because of COVID-19 attendance restrictions, is set to draw a sellout crowd of roughly 57,000. Beyond Saturday, there is additional significance: It marks another season that the league known for its "Original Six" roots in cities like New York, Chicago and Toronto is holding marquee outdoor events in a



Carter-Finley Stadium in Raleigh, N.C. is prepared to host an NHL Stadium Series hockey game Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023. The Washington Capitals and the Carolina Hurricanes are scheduled to play Saturday at the stadium.

so-called "nontraditional" market within its southern footprint.

Three years ago was Dallas. Last year was Nashville. Now it's North Carolina's capital city grabbing a spotlight for professional hockey in a region long associated with college football.

"This city has embraced us," said Steve Mayer, the NHL's chief content officer and event producer. "I think one of the things we've noticed being here

is just the talk everywhere we go. We're in a restaurant and the waiter or waitress comes up and they're talking about the game, an Uber driver talking about the game, at our hotel. The buzz is really out there."

Sean Henry, president and chief executive of the Nashville Predators, understands that feeling.

The Predators hosted last year's Stadium Series game at the home of the NFL's Tennessee Titans. Nashville had previously hosted the

2016 All-Star game and reached the Stanley Cup Final a year later. And this summer, the Predators will host the NHL draft, 20 years after first hosting the event. Meanwhile, the NHL brought its All-Star game earlier this month to the Sunrise, home of the Florida Panthers and held one in Tampa in 2018.

"We're kind of the go-to markets now, which is really nice," Henry said.

"It allows you to elevate conversations," he said.

Associated Press

"It's like a stamp of approval ... It's that statement of, everything's happening in the right way. It's like winning that blue ribbon, if you will. And you get to talk about it for years and years to come."

At the minimum, it represents another highlight for the former Hartford Whalers franchise since relocating to North Carolina for the 1997-98 season.

The Hurricanes have hosted two Stanley Cup Final series, winning in 2006. They hosted the 2004 draft and 2011 All-Star Weekend. And after a nine-year playoff drought, they have reached four consecutive postseasons with two division titles under coach and 2006 captain Rod Brind'Amour.

They also have a devoted fan base known for rarely passing up the opportunity to tailgate or create the roaring, festive environments now common at Carolina's home playoff games.

"I think they deserve it," Brind'Amour said.

"We've got a great fan base down there. We know about it. I'm there every day with them and they pack the place and they're loud and they support the team in a small market as well as any in the NHL." □

What's the beef? McDonald's, Wendy's spat over Daytona 500

By **DAN GELSTON**
 AP Sports Writer

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (AP) — What's the beef?

Turns out fast-food burger wars were on the menu in the run-up to the Daytona 500 over, of all things, the

paint schemes for cars sponsored by McDonald's and Wendy's.

McDonald's stamped its ubiquitous golden arches logo on the hood of 23XI Racing driver Bubba Wallace's No. 23 Toyota. Wendy's countered with a picture of a, well, super-sized beefy cheeseburger with the slogan "The Beef" emblazoned on Noah Gragson's No. 42 Chevrolet.

Wendy's CMO Carl Loredi trashed McDonald's logo selection as if it was a paper bag full of day-old fries. "We're proud of Noah Gragson's No. 42 'The BEEF' car, and fans have been praising the paint scheme

on social all week long," he told Sports Business Journal. "We can't say the same goes for our McBland competitors. At Wendy's, we don't cut corners."

McDonald's wasn't McLovin' it.

The salty retort caught the attention of 23XI President Steve Lauletta, who flame broiled his competitor on Twitter.

"Beauty is always in the eye of the beholder so appreciate your thoughts @carlloredo," Lauletta wrote. "I can tell you our focus @23XIRacing is on results so pretty happy with our 11th place qualifying result last night...you?"

Gragson was 28th in the Daytona 500 time trials.

Wallace and McDonalds got the edge in the Daytona 500 lineup and will start 15th on Sunday over Gragson and Wendy's at 22nd for NASCAR's season-opener.

23XI is co-owned by Michael Jordan, of course, a longtime McDonald's pitchman. Wallace weighed in with a GIF of a bemused Gary Payton.

Perhaps the big chill between the companies will continue into Sunday at the Daytona 500. How about a McFlurry or a Frosty for the winner to go with that trophy? □



Bubba Wallace's crew changes tires and adds fuel as he comes in for a pit stop during the first of two qualifying auto races for the NASCAR Daytona 500 at Daytona International Speedway, Thursday, Feb. 16, 2023, in Daytona Beach, Fla.

Associated Press

Column: Take that, all you imaginary haters!

By **PAUL NEWBERRY**
AP Sports Columnist

Forget the U.S. hockey team knocking off the mighty Soviets at the 1980 Winter Olympics.

That shocking upset doesn't come close to the Kansas City Chiefs winning the Super Bowl against all imaginary odds.

Or the Georgia Bulldogs somehow capturing a second straight national championship that no one except everyone saw coming.

Just listen to Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce, elegantly addressing the supposedly staggering mountain his team climbed to claim its second Super Bowl title in four years.

"Not one of y'all said the Chiefs were gonna take it home this year," Kelce barked after the Chiefs knocked off the Eagles in what we can only presume was a Joe Namath-level upset. "Not a single one! Feel that (expletive)! Feel it! And on top of that, the next time the Chiefs say something, put some respect on our name!"

We'll just conveniently ignore that the Chiefs had the third-best odds of reaching the Super Bowl at the beginning of the season. Or that they went on to earn home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs with a glittering 14-3 record.

Kelce was following the example set by the Bulldogs, who will go down as one of the most unexpected champions in college football history at least in the eyes of coach Kirby Smart and quarterback Stetson Bennett.

"They didn't listen to what everybody said about them," Smart said after Georgia squeaked out a 65-7 victory over TCU last month in the national title game. "Everybody doubted them to start the year. And that chip on their shoulder was just big enough to create an edge for our team."

Bennett, too, was clearly peeved that no one believed in a team that was the defending national

champion, moved to No. 1 in The Associated Press ranking two weeks into the season, and stayed there the rest of the year while

celebration, while gobbling down a dozen hot dogs. He reminded the silly members of the press that he hit 60 homers during the regular

27 opponents, the light-punching Tyson was gifted a shot at the heavyweight title against fearsome Trevor Berbick. The bookies

delivered another quip that would ring down through the ages, "Y'all kept telling us how bad we were. And we kept winning, and kept embarrassing people."

John Wooden's UCLA Bruins. The coach was known for his "Pyramid of Success," which was built on traits such as loyalty, skill and confidence. But Wooden left out his greatest building block: motivating a team that was clearly lacking in talent to win 10 national titles in 12 years. Turning Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Bill Walton into serviceable college players, Wooden was able to build a culture that "didn't listen to what everybody was saying about them" especially when the pessimism reached a fever pitch those two years they didn't win it all.

-- The 1955-60 Montreal Canadiens. After winning their fifth straight Stanley Cup title, the Habs couldn't resist a poke at all those who ridiculed a roster with only eight future Hall of Famers. "Aucun de vous n'a dit que les Canadiens allaient le ramener à la maison cette année," Rocket Richard snorted before announcing his retirement. "La prochaine fois que les Canadiens diront quelque chose, mettez un peu de respect sur notre nom!"

Next up for Kelce: hosting duties on the March 4 episode of "Saturday Night Live."

We presume he'll prep for the gig by looking for someone, anyone, who doubts he's up to the task.

And if he can't find anyone, he'll just make 'em up. □



Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce (87) celebrates with the trophy after the NFL Super Bowl 57 football game, Sunday, Feb. 12, 2023, in Glendale, Ariz. The Chiefs defeated the Philadelphia Eagles 38-35.

Associated Press

posting a 15-0 record.

"Man, y'all burned us," Bennett said at Georgia's championship celebration. "Y'all kept telling us how bad we were, and y'all couldn't understand it. And we kept winning, and we kept embarrassing people. 'Screw it, we got two rings.' In keeping with the lack-of-respect theme, we'd like to remember a few other unlikely champions who bravely overcame their make-believe haters.

The 1927 New York Yankees. After losing 44 games during the regular season (to go along with 110 victories) and capturing a fluky American League title by a mere 19 games, the team known as "Murderer's Row" entered the World Series against the Pittsburgh Pirates as huge underdogs. Somehow, the Yankees managed to pull off a four-game sweep that left everyone feeling downright foolish for calling the Pirates a shoe-in. "No one thought we could do it!" Babe Ruth shouted in the post-Series

season, which was more than every other TEAM in the league "The next time you talk about the Yankees, put some respect on our name!" Ruth barked before unleashing an enormous burp.

Red Auerbach's Boston Celtics. This rag-tag bunch managed to silence the naysayers with 11 NBA championships in 13 years. Auerbach did a masterful job of motivating a perennially overmatched team that occasionally had to send out a lineup featuring one or two players who WEREN'T future Hall of Famers. The coach would deliver the ultimate burn after every unexpected victory by firing up his underdog cigar. "Everybody doubted us to start the year," star player Bill Russell said over and over again through the 1960s, usually while being doused with champagne. "That chip on our shoulder was just big enough to create an edge for our team."

Mike Tyson. After failing to knock out two of his first

made Berbick a massive favorite, while the media pointed out how flawed the sport of boxing was for giving a clearly inferior challenger a shot at its most prestigious title. In an effort to entertain the crowd, Berbick intentionally ran into Tyson's fists for roughly 5 1/2 minutes, but the strategy backfired when his legs stopped working. Having barely broken a sweat, Tyson couldn't resist a poke at his skeptics. "Not one of y'all said I was gonna take home the heavyweight title. Not a single one!"


The 1960s Green Bay Packers. Coach Vince Lombardi was famously misquoted as saying, "Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing." What he actually said was, "Screw it, we got two rings." Lombardi dropped that gem on all the doubters after the Packers won the first two Super Bowls in dominating fashion, despite a shaky resume that included only five NFL titles over a seven-year period. Getting the last laugh, Lombardi

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